Combretum collinum

Fres.

Combretaceae

LOCAL NAMES
Afrikaans (boswilg); Amharic (tinjut); Bemba (munondwe,mufuka); English (variable combretum,bush-willow); Lozi (mulamana); Luganda (mukoola); Nyanja (mtebelebe,mkute,kalama); Tigrigna (sawa,kuto); Tongan (mukunza)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION
Combretum collinum is a small to medium-sized, semi-deciduous tree 4-18 m in height, with a rounded or flat, heavy crown. Young shoots are densely covered with short, soft hairs. Bark light grey, creamy-brown, reddish-brown or brown-black, fissured, transversely cracked, with smooth scales of various sizes.

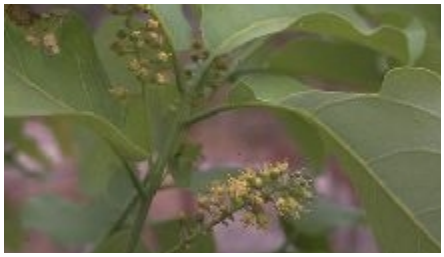
Leaves opposite to alternate, simple, narrowly elliptic to broadly ovate or obovate, up to 19 x 8 cm but usually about half this size, dark green above, paler green to silvery below, with or without dense woolly hairs; apex broadly tapering to attenuate; base broadly tapering; margin entire; petiole usually up to 3 cm long.

Flowers cream to yellow, up to 5 mm in diameter, sweetly scented, in axillary spikes usually about 5-6 cm long but which may reach 10 cm, conspicuous when the tree is in full flower.

Fruit 4-winged, 3-5.5 x 2.5-4.5 cm, rusty red when young, becoming dark chocolate brown or deep golden brown when mature, with a marked metallic sheen caused by scales; varies in shape but generally globose; old fruits may be found on the tree for most of the year.

Combretum was the name given by Pliny to a climbing plant, the identity of which has been lost in time. The specific name is the Latin word collinus meaning growing on a hill.

BIOLOGY
In southern Africa, flowers are often produced with the previous season's leaves in August to October, and fruiting occurs from January to August.



Combretum collinum leaves (Joris de Wolf, Patrick Van Damme, Diego Van Meersschaut)

Combretum collinum slash (Joris de Wolf, Patrick Van Damme, Diego Van Meersschaut)

Combretum collinum bark (Joris de Wolf, Patrick Van Damme, Diego Van Meersschaut)

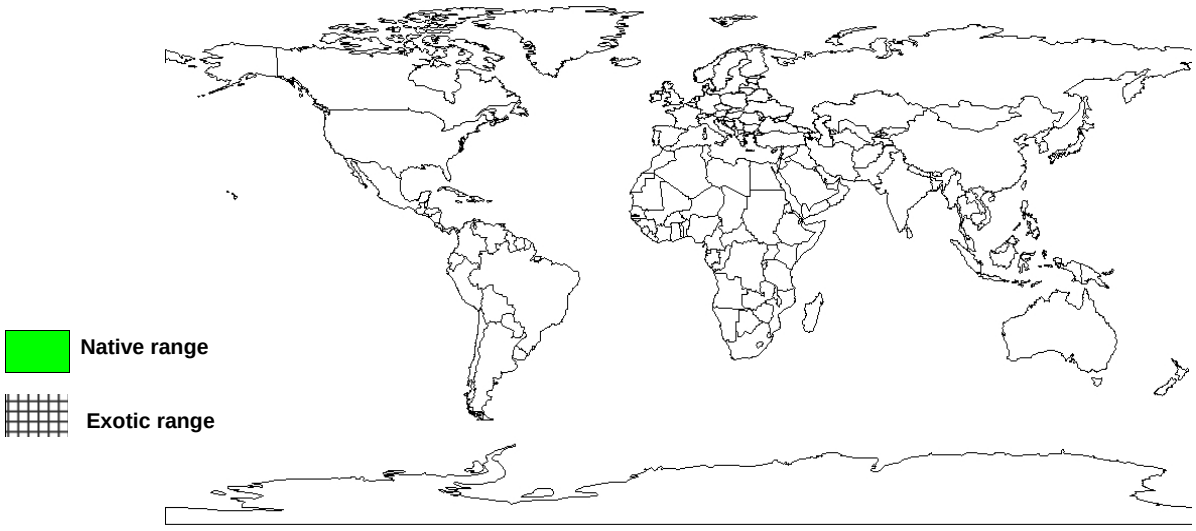
ECOLOGY

C. collinum occurs at medium to low altitudes in open woodlands. It is found throughout Zambia and is locally a common tree of Baikiaea Forest margins, deciduous thickets, and Kalahari and Lake Basin chipya woodland. It is occasional on anthills, in miombo woodlands, and in the dry, evergreen forests. Outside Zambia, it is widespread, extending from Senegal to East Africa and south to Natal and westwards to Angola. Trees are often dominant where they occur.

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: Angola, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Exotic:



The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.

PRODUCTS
Apiculture: Flowers produce good nectar for honey.

Fuel: C. collinum is a source of firewood and makes very good charcoal.

Timber: The tree has whitish-brown sapwood, which is not clearly differentiated from the light brown heartwood. It is fairly hard, not very durable, has an interlocked grain and a course texture. It is used for wagon building, canoes and tool handles.

Medicine: Roots are boiled and the decoction drunk warm as treatment for dysentery and snakebite.

SERVICES
Shade or shelter: Since the living tree is tolerant of grass fires, C. collinum is suitable for planting as a savannah firebreak.

Boundary or barrier or support: Branches can be cut and used to construct fences.

TREE MANAGEMENT
The slow-growing trees respond well to coppicing, lopping and pollarding.

GERMPLASM MANAGEMENT
Fruits can be stored for only a short period. Seed storage behaviour is orthodox, and seeds can be stored for up to 3 years.

FURTHER READNG

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Katende AB et al. 1995. Useful trees and shrubs for Uganda. Identification, Propagation and Management for Agricultural and Pastoral Communities. Regional Soil Conservation Unit (RSCU), Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA).

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SUGGESTED CITATION

Orwa C, Mutua A , Kindt R , Jamnadass R, Simons A. 2009. Agroforestree Database:a tree reference and selection guide version 4.0 (http://www.worldagroforestry.org/af/treedb/)